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VIII.—GISMOND OF SALERNE.

This tragedy was presented before Queen Elizabeth by the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple in 1567–8. In its original shape it remained in ms. until published a few years ago in Brandl's *Quellen des weltlichen Dramas in England*; but a recast by Robert Wilmot was printed in 1591 under the title *Tancred and Gismunda* and included in Dodsley's *Collection of Old English Plays*. From the initials appended to each act in this later version it has been concluded that Henry Noel wrote Act II, Christopher Hatton Act IV, and Robert Wilmot Act V; the authors of Act I (Rod. Staf.) and Act III (G. Al.) are as yet unidentified. Before examining the play it will be well to glance at the literary and dramatic influences under which it was produced. A notable beginning in English classical tragedy had been made at the Grand Christmas of the Inner Temple in 1561–2 by the performance of *Gorboduc*, which was repeated before the Queen at Whitehall a few weeks later: an unauthorized edition of the play was printed in 1565. In 1564 the Queen saw at King's College, Cambridge, "a Tragedie named *Dido*, in hexametre verse, without anie chorus," and "an English play called *Ezechias*, made by Mr. Udall." At Christmas, 1564, a tragedy by Richard Edwards (probably *Damon and Pythias*) was acted at Whitehall, and in 1566 his *Palamon and Arcyte* was presented before the Queen in the hall of Christ Church, Oxford, as well as a Latin play, called *Marcus Geminus*. At Gray's Inn the same year Gascoigne's *Supposes* (translated from Ariosto) and the *Jocasta* were performed: the last purported to be taken from Euripides, but was really a translation of Lodovico Dolce's adaptation, itself made probably not from

the Greek but from the Latin. Dolce adhered in the main to the model of Seneca, whose tragedies he had translated: English translations of eight out of the ten had also been published during the ten years before 1566, so that Elizabethan tragedy came under Senecan influence at first, second, and third hand. The learned dramatists of the Inner Temple no doubt had recourse to the original text, but like their fellows of Gray's Inn of a year or two before, they turned to Dolce as their immediate model, and they made an important step in advance by taking their plot from Boccaccio. It is true that Arthur Brooke in the preface to *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562) said that he had seen the same argument "lately set foorth on stage," but the play referred to is now to be found only at second-hand in a Dutch version, *Romeo en Juliette*, written about 1630.¹ *Gismond of Salerne* is the earliest extant English tragedy founded upon an Italian novel.

I.

THE DEBT TO BOCCACCIO.

A comparison of the text with that of the First Novel of the Fourth Day of Boccaccio's *Decamerone* shows that the English authors went to the original Italian and did not, as has been hitherto assumed, use the translation in Painter's

¹ I am indebted for this information to Dr. Harold de W. Fuller of Harvard University, whose article on the subject will be found in the July number of *Modern Philology*. Hunter (New Illustrations of *Shakespeare*, II, 130) and Courthope (*History of English Poetry*, IV, 100), suggest that Brooke referred to a Latin tragedy among the Sloane MSS. in the British Museum, but Dr. Fuller finds that this was based entirely on Brooke, and was probably written by a Cambridge student about 1605. Dr. Fuller thinks that the English original on which the Dutch play was founded was written about 1560, since, to judge from the Dutch version, it constantly echoed the phraseology of Boisteau's novel, which was first published in 1559.

Palace of Pleasure, which had just been published. As the play had five authors, it is necessary to establish this point for each act. In the first, little use is made of the original source, the purpose of this act being to present Gismond's grief at the loss of her husband, which Boccaccio does not even refer to, contenting himself with the statement that after a short married life she became a widow, and returned home to her father. But the English tragedian found that a line or two which Ghismonda uses in the original about her lover might be transferred in application to her husband. She says of the soul (*anima*) of Guiscardo: "Io son certa, che ella è ancora quicentro, e riguarda i luoghi de' suoi diletti, e de' miei: e come colei, che ancor son certa, che m'ama, aspetta la mia, dalla quale sommamente è amata." In I, ii, 30-1, we read:

Thy sprite, I know, doth lingre herabout,
and lokes that I pore wretch shold after come.

The evidence here is slight, but the two lines bear a closer resemblance to the Italian than to Painter's: "Truly I am well assured, that it is yet here within, that hath respecte to the place, aswell of his owne pleasures, as of mine, being assured (as she who is certaine, that yet he looveth me) that he attendeth for myne, of whom he is greatly beloved."

In Act II we have again a tedious dialoguizing of considerations which Boccaccio expresses in a few lines, and again borrowings from another part of the novel, in themselves of no great moment, but pointing to the Italian text rather than to Painter as the authority on which they rest. Here are the passages in question:—

(1.)

"Sono adunque, siccome da te generata, di carne, e sì poco vivuta, che ancor son giovane: e per l'una cosa, e per l'altra piena di concupiscibile desiderio: al quale maravigliosissime forze hanno date l'aver già, per essere stata maritata, conosciuto qual piacer sia a così fatto desiderio dar compimento."

Gismond. No, no, sutch hap shold not so long forwast
my youthfull dayes ; which brings me greater grefe,
when I somtime record my pleasure past.

(II, i, 38-40.)

"I am then as you be, begotten of fleshe, and my yeres so few, as yet
but yonge, and thereby full of lust and delight. Wherunto the knowledge
which I have had alredy in mariage, forceth me to accomlishe that
desire."

(2.)

"Esser ti dovè, Tancredi, manifesto, essendo tu di carne, aver generata
figliuola di carne, e non di pietra, o di ferro : e ricordar ti dovevi, e dei,
quantunque tu ora sii vecchio, chenti, e quali, e con che forza vengano le
leggi della giovinezza."

Lucrece. Such passions hold her tender hart in presse,
as shew the same not to be wrought of stele,
or carved out of the hard and stony rock,
that as by course of kinde can nought desire,
nor feleth nought but as a senselesse stock.
Such stern hardnesse ne ought ye to require
in her, whoes gentle hart and tender yeres
yet flouing in her chefest lust of youth
is led of force to feele the whote desires
that fall unto that age.

(II, ii, 19-28.)

"You ought deare father to knowe, that your selfe is of fleshe, and of
fleshe you have engendred me your daughter, and not of Stone or Iron.
In likewyse you ought, and must remember (although now you be arrived
to olde yeares) what yonge folkes bee, and of what great power the lawe
of youth is."

In Act III the writer's direct reference to Boccaccio is
more obvious :—

"Guiscardo il prese ; ed avisando costei non senza cagione dovergliiele
aver donato, e così detto ; partitosi, con esso sene tornò alla sua casa. E
guardando la canna, e quella trovando fessa, l'aperse."

Guisharde. Assuredly it is not without cause
she gave me this : somthing she meant thereby :
for therewithall I might perceive her pause
a while, as though some weighty thing did lye
upon her hart, which she conceled, bycause
the bystanders shold not our love espie.

This clift declares that it hath ben disclosed :
 parhappes herin she hath something enclosed.
 (He breakes the cane and findes a letter enclosed.)

(III, iii, 41-48.)

“Guiscardo toke it, and thought that shee did not geve it unto him, without some special purpose went to his chamber, and loking upon the Cane perceived it to be hollowe, and openyng it founde the letter within whiche shee had written.”

Painter mistranslated *fessa* (split) by the word “hollowe:” the dramatist had a keener eye for the significance of the original. “This clift declares,” &c. The writer of the argument was equally alive to the point: “a letter subtilly enclosed in a cloven cane.”

In Act IV the following passages lead to the same conclusion. In the first instance it is Tancredi who speaks:—

(1.)

“Ghismonda, parendomi conoscere la tua virtù, e la tua onestà, mai non mi sarebbe potuto cader nell’ animo (quantunque mi fosse stato detto) se io co’ miei occhi non l’avessi veduto, che tu di sottoposti ad alcuno huomo, se tuo marito stato non fosse, avessi, non che fatto, ma pur pensato.”

No, no : there stayed in me so settled trust,
 that thy chast life and uncorrupted minde
 wold not have yelded to unlawfull lust
 of strayeng love, other than was assigned
 lefull by law of honest wedlockes band,
 that, if these self same eyes had not behold
 thy shame, that wrought the woe, wherein I stand,
 in vain ten thousand Catoes shold have told,
 that thou didst ones dishonestly agree
 with that vile traitor Counté Palurine,
 without regard had to thy self, or me,
 unshamefastly to staine thy state and myne.

(IV, iii, 17-28.)

“ ‘Gismonda, I had so much affiaunce and truste in thy vertue and honestie, that it coulede never have entred into my mynde (althoughe it had bene tolde me, if I had not sene it with mine owne propre eyes) but that thou haddest not onely in deede, but also in thought, abandoned the companie of all men, except it had bene thy husbände.’ ”

(2.)

“Al quale Guiscardo niuna altra cosa disse, se non questo. Amor può troppo più, che nè voi, nè io possiamo.”

But greater lord is love, and larger reigne
he hath upon eche god and mortal wight,
than yow upon your subjectes have, or I
upon my self.

(IV, iv, 36-39.)

“To whom Guiscardo gave no other aunswere, but that Love was of greater force, than either any Prince or hym selfe.”

Two passages in Act V make it abundantly clear that they were independently translated from Boccaccio, not taken from Painter :—

(1.)

“Il tuo padre ti manda questo, per consolarti di quella cosa, che tu più ami, come tu hai lui consolato di ciò, che egli più amava.”

“Thy father hath here in this cup thee sent
that thing to joy and comfort thee withall
which thou loved best, even as thou weart content
to comfort him with his chefe joy of all.”

(V, i, 201-4.)

“‘Thy father hath sent thee this presente, to comforte thy selfe with the thing, which thou doest chieffie love, as thou haste comforted him of that which he loved most.’”

The *di* of the last line, which the dramatist translated “with” and Painter “of,” seems to mean “concerning, with respect to, for;” and here Painter comes nearer the original than R. W.; but the divergence is none the less significant.

(2.)

“Ahi dolcissimo albergo di tutti i miei piaceri, maladetta sia la crudeltà di colui, che con gli occhi della fronte or mi ti fa vedere. Assai m’era con quegli della mente riguardarti a ciascuna ora. Tu hai il tuo corso fornito, e di tale, chente la fortuna tel concedette, ti se’ spacciato. Venuto se’ alla fine, alla qual ciascun corre. Lasciate hai le miserie del mondo, e le fatiche, e dal tuo nemico medesimo quella sepoltura hai, che il tuo valore ha meritata. Niuna cosa ti mancava ad aver compiute esequie, se non le lagrime

di colei, la qual tu, vivendo, cotanto amasti : le quali, acciocchè tu l'avessi, pose Iddio nell' animo al mio dispietato padre, che a me ti mandasse : ed io le ti darò (comechè di morire con gli occhi asciutti, e con viso da niuna cosa spaventato proposto avessi) e dateleti, senza alcuno indugio farò, che la mia anima si congiugnerà con quella, adoperandol tu, che tu già cotanto cara guardasti."

Ah pleasant harborrow of my hartës thought.
 Ah swete delight, joy, comfort of my life.
 Ah cursed be his crueltie that wrought
 thee this despite, and unto me such grefe,
 to make me to behold thus with these eyes
 thy woefull hart, and force me here to see
 this dolefull sight. Alas, did not suffice
 that with my hartes eyen continually
 I did behold the same? Thow hâst fordone
 the course of kinde, dispatched thy life from snares
 of fortunes venomed bayt : yea thou hâst ronne
 the mortall race, and left these worldly cares,
 and of thy foe, to honor thee with all,
 received a worthy grave to thy desert.
 Nothing doeth want to thy just funerall,
 but even my teres to wash thy bloody hart
 thus fouled and defaced, which to the end
 eke thou might have, Jove in the mynde putt soe
 of my despitefull father for to send
 thy hart to me. and thou shalt have them loe,
 though I determed to shede no tere at all,
 but with drye eyes and constant face to dye,
 yea though I thought to wett thy funerall
 only with blood, and with no weping eye.
 This doen fourthwith my soule shall come to thee,
 whome in thy life thou did so derely love.

(V, ii, 25-50.)

"'Oh sweete harboroughe of my pleasures, cursed be the crueltye of him that hath caused mee at this time to loke uppon thee with the eyes of my face : it was pleasure ynoughe, to see thee every hower, amonges people of knowledge and understanding. Thou hast finished thy course, and by that ende, which fortune vouchsafed to give thee, thou art dispatched, and arrived to the ende wherunto all men have recourse : thou hast forsaken the miseries and traveyles of this world, and haste had by the enemy himselfe such a sepulture as thy worthinesse deserveth. There needeth nothing els to accomlishe thy funerall, but onely the teares of her whom thou diddest hartelye love all the dayes of thy lyfe. For

having wherof, our Lord did put into the head of my unmercifull father to send thee unto me, and truly I will bestow some teares uppon thee, although I was determined to die, without sheading any teares at all, stoutlie, not fearefull of any thinge. And when I have powred them out for thee, I will cause my soule, which thou hast heretofore so carefully kepte, to be joyned wyth thine.' ”

R. W., in line 32, correctly translates “con quegli della mente” which Painter woefully misunderstands; and in the last line quoted, the sense of “che tu già cotanto cara guardasti” is more closely rendered by the dramatist than by the professed translator.

The evidence, therefore, entitles us to reject the conclusion arrived at by Sherwood (*Die Neu-Englischen Bearbeitungen der Erzählung Boccaccios von Ghismonda and Guiscardo*) and adopted by Brandl that Painter was most probably used: it is manifest that Painter was not followed: if used at all, his translation was carefully checked and corrected by comparison with the original. But as I shall show that the dramatists made use of an Italian play which had not been translated, there seems no reason to suppose that they would need anything beyond Boccaccio's text, which they obviously understood better than Painter himself. Indeed, famous as the latter's versions of Italian novels are, it must be confessed that in the instance under consideration, his efforts are not particularly happy. *E. g.*, in Ghismonda's death scene he translates “stringendosi al petto il morto cuore” *strained the dead hart harde to her stomacke!*

II.

THE DEBT TO DOLCE.

I happened to pick up in a second-hand book shop at Florence a copy of Dolce's *Didone* (1547) and on reading it I was at once struck by the close resemblance of the opening lines to those of *Gismond of Salerne*. The parallel

seems to have escaped most of the historians of the drama except the omniscient Creizenach, who mentions it in passing. The indebtedness of the English to the Italian tragedy, however, is found on examination to go much further than this. Not only is the supernatural machinery taken from Dolce's play, but the whole conception of Gismond, the grief-stricken widow a second time the victim of Love, is due to the Italian tragedy, and not to the novel, for Boccaccio's heroine is presented in a very different light. The forces to which his Ghismonda yields are natural forces. Speaking on his own behalf in the Introduction to the Fourth Day, Boccaccio says: "Carissime donne . . . io conosco, che altra cosa dir non potrà alcun con ragione, se non che gli altri, ed io, che v'amiano, naturalmente operiamo. Alle cui leggi, cioè della natura, voler contrastare, troppo gran forze bisognano, e spesse volte, non solamente in vano, ma con grandissimo danno del faticante s'adoperano." The obedience of his heroine to this law of nature is conscious and deliberate: "si pensò di volere avere, se esser potesse, occultamente un valoroso amante." Her plea to her father in her own defence is to the same effect—that she is made of flesh, and not of rock or iron—a plea which the English dramatist has weakened by placing it not in her mouth, but in that of the Aunt, Lucrece, and putting it before, not after, the event. At the end of the novel, the lovers' fate is lamented, but they are felt to be objects of envy as well as compassion. "Il Re con rigido viso disse. Poco prezzo mi parebbe la vita mia a dover dare per la metà diletto di quello, che con Guiscardo ebbe Ghismonda." The writers of the English tragedy took a very different view. R. Wilmot, in his preface to *Tancred and Gismunda*, protests that his purpose "tendeth only to the exaltation of virtue and suppression of vice," and compares the tragedy with Beza's *Abraham* and Buchanan's *Jephtha*, apologizing for

any defects on account of the youth of his coadjutors. "Nevertheless herein they all agree, commending virtue, detesting vice, and lively deciphering their overthrow that suppress not their unruly affections." Accordingly the Chorus in *Gismond of Salerne* hold up "worthy dames" such as Lucrece and Penelope as "a mirrour and a glasse to womankind," and exhort their hearers to resist Cupid's assaults and be content with a moderate and virtuous affection (Choruses II, III, IV). The Epilogue assures the ladies in the audience that such disordered passions are unknown "in Britain land :"

Nor Pluto heareth English ghostes complaine
our dames disteined lyves. Therefore ye may
be free from fere. Suffiseth to mainteine
the vertues which we honor in yow all :
so as our Britain ghostes, when life is past,
may praise in heven, not plaine in Plutoes hall
our dames, but hold them vertuous and chast,
worthy to live where furie never came,
where Love can see, and beares no deadly bowe.

It was, therefore, to Dolce's Dido and to the Phaedra of Seneca and Euripides that the English dramatists turned for an example of the victim of guilty passion they wished to present. Dolce in the prologue to *Didone* introduced Cupid as the evil influence which worked the Queen's ruin. The original suggestion came perhaps from Vergil (for in Dolce's prologue Cupid appears in the form of Ascanius) perhaps from a Latin translation of the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, where Aphrodite speaks the prologue, but so far as the English dramatists are concerned it is obvious that not only the idea, but the words, were taken directly from Dolce :—

Io, che dimostro in viso,
A la statura, e à i panni,
D'esser picciol fanciullo,
Si come voi mortale :
Son quel gran Dio, che'l mondo chiama Amore.

Quel, che pò in cielo, e in terra,
 Et nel bollente Averno ;
 Contra di cui non vale
 Forza, ne human consiglio :
 Ne d'ambrosia mi pasco,
 Si come gli altri Dei,
 Ma di sangue, e di pianto.
 Ne l'una mano io porto
 Dubbia speme, fallace, e breve gioia ;
 Ne l'altra affanno, e noia,
 Pene, sospiri, e morti.

(*Didone*, 1-16.)

The beginning of *Gismond of Salerne* is a translation, with slight omissions and a little rearrangement, of the above lines :—

Cupide.

Loe I, in shape that seme unto your sight
 a naked boy, not clothed but with wing,
 am that great god of love that with my might
 do rule the world, and everie living thing.
 This one hand beares vain hope, short joyfull state,
 with faire semblance the lover to allure :
 this other holdes repentance all to late,
 warr, fiër, blood, and paines without recure.
 On swete ambrosia is not my foode,
 nor nectar is my drink, as to the rest
 of all the Goddes. I drink the lovers blood,
 and eate the living hart within his brest.

The next four lines :—

The depe Avern my percing force hath knowen.
 What secret hollow do the huge seas hide
 where blasting fame my actes hath not forth blowen?
 To me the mighty Jove him self hath yeld,

might be suggested by *Didone*, II, i, 27-29 :—

Dio piu ch'altro possente ;
 Dio, che disprezzi le saette horrende
 Del gran padre d'i Dei ;

but are more probably taken direct from Seneca, with whom this thought is a commonplace. See *Phaedra*, 191-2, and

Octavia, 566–8, and compare the references in the following lines to Mars and Troy with *Phaedra*, 193, and *Octavia*, 832–3. Lines 61–4 of the prologue :—

This royall palace will I entre in,
and there enflame the faire Gismonda soe,
in creping thorough all her veines within,
that she thereby shall raise much ruthe and woe

resemble a passage in Dolce's prologue (27–34) :—

Con quella face ardente,
C'hò nel mio petto ascosa
Il che subito i fei
Ch'ella mi strinse al seno
Sotto imagine falsa
Del pargoletto mio nipote caro :
Et d'occulto veneno
L'hebbi il misero cuor colmo e ripieno.

But the resemblance may be due to a common origin in Seneca's *Medea*, 823–4 :—

imas
urat serpens flamma medullas.

Gismond's lament, which follows, reveals one or two parallels with that of Dido in Dolce, V, i :—

(1.)

Oh vaine unstedfast state of mortall thinges !
Whoe trustes the world doeth leave to brittle stay.
Such fickle frute his flattering blome forth brings ;
ere it be ripe it falleth to decaye.
The joy and blisse, that late I did possesse
in weale at will with one I lovèd best,
disturnèd now into so depe distresse
hâth taught me plaine to know our states unrest.

(I, ii, 1–8.)

Et tu volubil Dea, che'l mondo giri
Calcando i buoni, e sollevando i rei :
Che t'hò fatto io? che invidia ohime t'ha mosso
A ridurmi à lo stato, in ch'io mi trovo?

Quanto mutata m'hai da quel ch'io fui,
 Che in un sol punto m'hai levato, e tolto
 Tutto quel, che mi fea viver contenta.

(V, i, 37-43.)

(2.)

But yet abide : I may perhappes devise
 some way to be unburdened of my life.

(I, ii, 33-34.)

Però è ben tempo di provar s'io posso
 Finir le pene mie con questa mano.

(V, i, 55-56.)

The Chorus which closes Act I is identical in thought with that which closes Act II in Dolce, but as both are mere tissues of Senecan commonplaces, this similarity does not necessarily prove indebtedness. One or two resemblances in phraseology may, however, be noted :—

(1.)

No raansom serves for to redeme our dayes.
 If prowessse could preserve, or worthy dedes,

(9-10.)

In van contra di lor nostro intelletto
 Opra l'alta virtù d'i doni suoi.

(16-17.)

(2.)

But happy is he, that endes this mortal life
 by spedy death, whoe is not forced to see
 the many cares, nor fele the sondry grefe,
 which we susteine in woe and miserie.

(33-36.)

Beato chi piu tosto s'avicina
 Al fine, à cui camina
 Chi prima è nato, ò nascera giamai.

(25-27.)

The last three lines were probably taken by Dolce from *Hercules Cætus*, 104-111 :—

Par ille est superis cui pariter dies
 et fortuna fuit. mortis habet uices
 lente cum trahitur uita gementibus.
 quisquis sub pedibus fata rapacia

et puppem posuit liminis ultimi,
 non captiua dabit bracchia uinculis
 nec pompae ueniet nobile ferculum.
 numquam est ille miser cui facile est mori.¹

But they might have been suggested by a Latin translation of Sophocles :—

μη φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον· τὸ δ', ἐπεὶ φανῇ,
 βῆναι κεῖθεν ὅθεν περ ἦκει πολὺ δεύτερον ὡς τάχιστα.
 (*Œdipus Coloneus*, 1225-8.)

or by Cicero's "Non nasci homini longe optimum esse, proximum autem quam primum mori" (*Tusc.*, I, 48, 115). The thought was taken by Sophocles from Theognis, but with the latter writer, Dolce, who knew no Greek, was probably unacquainted.

In Act II the parallels are fewer and less striking. Gismond indeed reflects :—

For if I should my pleasant yeres neglect
 of fresh grene youth frutelesse to fade away :
 whearto live I ? (II, ii, 26-28.)

in much the same terms as Dido :—

Et ch'a l'incontro era sciochezza grande
 A consumar il fior de' miei verd' anni
 Senza gustar alcun soave frutto.

¹ This passage was translated by Dolce as follows :—

Colui, ch' eguale è ai Dei,
 A cui il giorno fu par con la fortuna
 Sottoposto è ancor' egli
 A la pallida morte.
 La lunga vita spesso
 Ci da causa di pianto ;
 Onde chi tosto corre
 Al nostro ultimo fine,
 Non temerà di gire
 In servitù d'altrui :
 Ne misero è colui,
 Che disprezza la morte.

And the comparison of a wave-beaten ship with which Gismond closes this speech (II, i, 53–58) is used by Æneas in *Didone* (II, ii, 87–94), but this is a favorite Senecan metaphor (see *Medea*, 945–51, and *Agamemnon*, 139–144).

In Act III I observe no parallels with *Didone* worth noting; but the author of Act IV (undoubtedly Christopher Hatton, who was Master of the Game at the Grand Christmas of 1561–2, when *Gorboduc* was performed) evidently kept an eye on the Italian play. Megaera, who opens the act, is no doubt derived ultimately from Seneca's *Thyestes*, where she drives the ghost of Tantalus to curse his own descendants. He comes unwillingly :—

Quid ora terres uerbere et tortos ferox
minaris angues? quid famem infixam intimis
agitas medullis? flagrat incensum siti
cor et perustis flamma uisceribus micat.
sequor.

In *Didone* the ghost introduced is that of Sichæus; the serpents and other torments are applied, not to the bearer, but to the victim of the curse. Cupid says in the Prologue :—

Però discendo al fondo
De l'empia styge, e del suo cerchio fuora
Vò trar la pallid' ombra
Del misero Sicheo
(Che ben impetrerò de Pluto questa
Gratia degna, et honesta)
Et vò, ch' à Dido ella si mostri inanzi :
Tolto prima d' Aysso
Una de le ceraste ;
Che in vece di capei, torte e sanguigne
A le tempie d' intorno
Ondeggiando di quelle
Furie spietate e felle,
Che sogliono voltar sossopra il mondo,
Et questa i vò, che tutto l'empi il core
Di sdegno, e di furore,
Fin ch' à morte trabocchi,
Et turbar vegga gli occhi

De la sirocchia altera
Di quei, che move il sole, e ogni sphaera.

In *Didone*, II, i, Cupid brings the snake on to the stage :—

Che in tanto io le porrò su 'l bianco petto
Questo serpe sanguigno, horrido, e fiero,
C'hò divolto pur' hora
Dal capo di Megera,
Il quale il cor di lei roda e consumi.

We learn later (III, i, 79–83) that the serpent was actually seen on Dido's neck :—

Fu posto à lei da non veduta mano
Un serpe al collo, che con molti nodi
Lo cinse errando, e sibillando pose
La testa in seno ; e la vibrante lingua
Quinci e quindi lecò le poppe e'l petto.

Hatton spared the English audience some of the details, but he gave them two snakes instead of one, and added a characteristic moral turn. His Megaera says :—

Loe, I will throwe
into her fathers brest this stinging snake,
and into hers an other will I cast.
So stong with wrath, and with recurelesse woe,
eche shalbe others murder at the last.
Furies must aide, when men will ceasse to know
their Goddes : and Hell shall send revenging paine
to those, whome Shame from sinne can not restraine.

(VI, i, 37–44.)

The Gentlemen of the Inner Temple were apparently fond of these grisly sights, for in the Dumb Show before the Fourth Act of *Gorboduc* three Furies were brought on the stage “clad in blacke garments sprinkled with bloud and flames, their bodies girt with snakes, their heds spread with serpents instead of heare, the one bearing in her hande a snake, the other a whip, and the thirde a burning fire-brande.”¹

¹ See also Chorus at end of Act IV, 12–15.

III. THE DEBT TO SENECA.

The divergence in the development of the plot between *Didone* and *Gismond* made Dolce of little service to our authors for the latter part of their play, and they turned to the unfailing fount of early Elizabethan tragedy—Seneca. In the character and extent of their borrowings they come half-way between the general imitation of *Gorboduc* and the exact and wholesale copying of *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, which was presented to her Majesty by the Gentlemen of Gray's Inn in 1588. Some of the Senecan parallels in the earlier acts of the play have already been quoted. In the Chorus at the end of Act I, there appear to be reminiscences of *Thyestes*, 596–622, *Octavia*, 933–5, *Ædipus*, 1010–11, *Agamemnon*, 57–70, *Hercules Furens*, 376–382, *Phædra*, 1132–52, *Octavia*, 915–18, in the order given; but the resemblance is in no case very close. One may serve as an example for all :—

Loke what the cruël sisters do decree,
the mighty Jove himself can not remove.

(29–30.)

non illa deo uertisse licet
quæ nexa suis currunt causis.

(*Ædipus*, 1010–11.)

The author of Act II (probably Henry Noel) either had not learnt the lesson one admirer of Seneca's tragedies used to teach his pupils—"how and wherein they may imitate them, and borrow something out of them"—or he preferred to rely on his own efforts. His imitations of Seneca are as few and faint as of the *Didone*. The chorus was, no doubt, suggested by *Octavia*, 298–312 and 689–95. The only other parallel I have thought worth noting is this :—

Suffiseth this, good niece, that you have sayed.
Full well I see how sondry passions strive

in your unquiet brest : for oft ere this
 your countenance half confused did plainly shoue
 some cloudy thoughtes overwhelmed all your blisse.

(II, i, 59-63.)

Regina Danaum et inclitum Ledaë genus
 quid tacita uersas quidue consilii inpotens
 tumido feroces impetus animo geris?
 licet ipsa sileas, totus in uultu est dolor.

(*Agamemnon*, 126-9.)

Act III is much richer in allusions. The author quotes Chaucer (III, ii, 1) : —

Pitie, that moveth everie gentle hart,

and Cupid's "Now shall they know what mighty Love can do" reminds one of Aphrodite's Prologue in the *Hippolytus* of Euripides; but this is probably a mere coincidence. Seneca's *Phaedra* is, however, obviously copied in the following scenes and Chorus. Lines 105-8, 368-94, 649-51 should be compared with scene ii, and the beginning of scene iii; and lines 621-4 with the end of scene iii. In the Chorus the following may be noted :—

(1.)

Full mighty is thy power, o cruel Love,
 if Jove himself can not resist thy bowe :
 but sendest him down even from the hevens above
 in sondry shapen here to the earth belowe.

(1-4.)

Quid fera frustra bella mouetis?
 inuicta gerit tela Cupido.
 flammis uestros obruet ignes,
 quibus extinxit fulmina saepe
 captumque Iouem caelo traxit.

(*Octavia*, 820-4.)

et iubet caelo superos relicto
 uultibus falsis habitare terras.

(*Phaedra*, 299-300.)

(2.)

Then how shold mortal men escape thy dart,
 the fervent flame, and burning of thy fire?
 sins that thy might is such, and sins thow art
 both of the seas and land the lord and sire.

(5-8.)

Sacer est ignis, credite laesis,
 nimiumque potens.
 qua terra mari cingitur alto
 quaque ethereo
 candida mundo sidera currunt.

(*Phaedra*, 336-340.)

(3.)

For Love assaultes not but the idle hart :
 and such as live in pleasure and delight,
 he turneth oft their glad joyes into smart.

(17-19.)

uis magna mentis blandus atque animi calor
 amor est. iuventae gignitur luxu otio,
 nutritur inter laeta fortunae bona.

(*Octavia*, 573-5.)

(4.)

Whoe yeldeth unto him his captive hart,
 ere he resist, and holdes his open brest
 withouten warr to take his bloody dart,
 let him not think to shake of, when him list,
 his heavy yoke. Resist his first assaulte :
 weak is his bowe, his quenched brand is cold.

(33-38.)

extingue flammās neue te dirae spei
 praebe obsequentem. quisquis in primo obstitit
 pepulitque amorem tutus ac uictor fuit,
 qui blandiendo dulce nutriuit malum
 sero recusat ferre quod subiit iugum.

(*Phaedra*, 136-140.)

quem si fouere atque alere desistas, cadit
 breuique uires perdit extinctus suas.

(*Octavia*, 576-7.)

(5.)

But he geves poison so to drink in gold.

(41.)

uenenum in auro bibitur.

(*Thyestes*, 453.)

The opening of Act IV is doubtless imitated from the opening of the *Thyestes*, but the same examples of the pains of hell occur in *Octavia*, 631-5, and *Didone*, IV, i, 126-133. The invocation of Jove's thunder at the beginning of scene ii was probably suggested by *Phaedra*, 679-90, or

Thyestes, 1081–1100 ;¹ this stock device of Seneca was to become no less familiar in Elizabethan tragedy. It had already been used in *Gorboduc* (end of III, i) :—

O heavens, send down the flames of your revenge ;
 Destroie, I saie, with flashe of wrekeful fier
 The traitour sonne, and then the wretched sire !

The original passage in the *Phaedra* was quoted—or rather misquoted—in *Titus Andronicus*, IV, i, 81–2 :—

Magni Dominator poli,
 Tam lentus audis scelera ? tam lentus vides ?

Shakspere possibly had it in mind when he made Lear say (II, iv, 230–1) :—

I do not bid the thunder bearer shoot,
 Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.

It is in the First Scene of Act V that the imitation of Seneca is most extensive and most obvious. Renuchio is the regular Senecan messenger, the detailed horror of his story is quite after Seneca's manner, and there are many lines translated, with slight alterations, from the narratives of the *Thyestes* and other plays :—

(1.)

O cruel fate ! o dolefull destinie !
 O heavy hap ! o woe can not be told !
 (1–2.)
 O sors acerba. (Phaedra, 1000.)
 O dira fata saeua miseranda horrida.
 (Troades, 1066.)

(2.)

Chor. What newes be these ?

¹ It came originally from Sophocles, *Electra*, 823–6 :

ποῦ ποτε κεραυνὸς Διὸς, ἢ ποῦ φάεθων
 "Ἄλιος, εἰ τᾶντ' ἐφορῶντες κρύπτουσιν ἔκκηλοι ;

- Renu. Is this Salerne I see?
 What? doeth king Tancred govern here, and guide?
 Is this the place where civile people be?
 or do the savage Scythians here abide?
- Chor. What meanes this cruel folk, and eke this king,
 that thus yow name? Declare how standes the case?
 and whatsoëver dolefull newes yow bring
 recompt fourthwith.

- Ren. Where shall I turne my face?
 or whether shall I bend my weryed sight?
 what ever way I seke or can devise,
 or do I what I can to ease my plight,
 the cruel fact is ever in myne eyes.
- Chor. Leave of this wise to hold us in such maze
 of doutfull drede what newes yow have to show.
 For drede of thinges unknowen doeth allway cause
 man drede the worst, till he the better know.
 Tell therfore what is chaunced, and wherunto
 this bloody cuppe thus in your hand yow bring.

(21-38.)

- Chor. quid portas noui?
- Nunt. Quanam ista regio est? Argos et Sparte inpios
 sortita fratres et maris gemini premens
 fauces Corinthos, an feris Hister fugam
 praebens Alanis, an sub aeterna niue
 Hyrcana tellus, an uagi passim Scythae?
- Chor. quis hic nefandi est conscius monstri locus?
 effare et istud pande quodcumque est malum.
- Nunt. Si steterit animus, si metu corpus rigens
 remittet artus. haeret in uulta trucis
 imago facti. ferte me insanae procul
 illo procellae ferte, quo fertur dies
 hinc raptus.

- Chor. animos grauius incertos tenes.
 quid sit quod horres effer, autorem indica.
 non quaero quis sed uter. effare ocus.

(Thyestes, 626-640.)

(3.)

although my minde so sorrowfull a thing
 repine to tell, and though my voice eschue
 to say what I have seen :
 uocem dolori lingua luctifica negat.

(40-2.)

(Phaedra, 1004.)

(4.)

The description of the tower and dungeon (45-68) is modelled upon *Thyestes*, 641-79,¹ with a possible reminiscence of the tower in the *Troades* (630-1), from which Astyanax leaps "intrepidus animo."

(5.)

Cho. O cruel dede.

Ren. why? deme ye this to be
the dolefull newes that I have now to show?
Is here (think yow?) end of the crueltie,
that I have seen?

Cho. Could worse or crueller woe
be wrought to him, than to bereve him life?

Ren. What? think yow this outrage did end so well?
The horror of the fact, the greatest grefe,
the crueltie, the terror is to tell.

Cho. Alack, what could be more? They threw percase
the dead body to be devoured and eate
of the cruel wilde beastes.

Ren. O me, alas,
wold god it had ben cast a dolefull meate
to beastes and birdes. But loe that dredfull thing,
which even the tygre wold not work, but to
fulfill his hongre with, that hath the king
withouten ruthe commaunded to be do,
only to please his cruel hart withall.
Oh, happy had ben his chaunce, to happy alas,
if birdes had eate his corps, yea hart and all.

(149-167.)

Chor. o saeuum scelus.

Nunt. exhorruistis? hactenus non stat nefas,
plus est.

Chor. An ultra maius aut atrocius
natura recipit?

Nunt. sceleris hunc finem putas?
gradus est.

¹Copied also in Giralaldi's *Orbecche*, IV, i, 59-62:—

Giace nel fondo di quest' alta torre,
In parte sì solinga, e sì riposta,
Che non vi giunge mai raggio di Sole,
Un luoco dedicato a' sacrificii.

Chor. quid ultra potuit? obiecit feris
 lanianda forsan corpora atque igne arcuit.
 Nunt. utinam arcuisset. ne tegat functos humus,
 ne soluat ignis, auibus epulandos licet
 ferisque triste pabulum saevis trahat.
 Votum est sub hoc, quod esse supplicium solet.

(*Thyestes*, 743-752.)

(6.)

The warme entrailes were toren out of his brest
 within their handes trembling not fully dead :
 his veines smoked : his bowelles all to strest
 ruthesse were rent, and throwen amide the place :
 all clotted lay the blood in lompes of gore,
 sprent on his corps, and on his palëd face.
 His hart panting out from his brest they tore.

(182-188.)

erepta uiuis exta pectoribus tremunt
 spirantque uenae corque adhuc pauidum salit.

(*Thyestes*, 755-6.)

(7.)

O haynous dede ! which no posteritie
 will ones beleve.

(207-8.)

O nullo scelus
 credibile in aeuo quodque posteritas neget.

(*Thyestes*, 753-4.)

The imitations of Seneca were made, so far as I have been able to judge, from the original, and not from the English translation. The latter reveals occasional similarities of phrase, as in No. 1 of the last series of quotations, where the translators render Seneca's lines :—

O heavy happe

O dyre, fierce, wretched, horrible,
 O cruell fates accurst.

But these might well be mere coincidences ; and such instances of the use of the same words are rare. In most cases the version of the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple gives every evidence of independence of the English trans-

lation. A fair idea of the relation of the two to the original text is given by comparing quotations 5, 6 and 7 with Heywood's rendering of the same lines in his translation of the *Thyestes* :—

- Chor. O heynous hateful act.
 Mess. Abhorre ye this? ye heare not yet the end of all the fact,
 There followes more.
 Chor. A fiercer thing, or worse then this to see
 Could Nature beare?
 Mess. why thinke ye this of gylt the end to be?
 It is but part.
 Chor. what could be more? to cruel beastes he cast
 Perhappes their bodyes to be torne, and kept from fyres at last.
 Mess. Would God he had : that never tombe the dead might over hyde,
 Nor flames dissolve, though them for food to foules in pastures wyde
 He had out throwen, or them for pray to cruell beastes would flinge.
 That which the worst was wont to be, were here a wished thing.
 That them their father saw untombd : but oh more cursed crime
 Uncredible, the which denye will men of after tyme :
 From bosomes yet alive out drawne the trembling bowels shake,
 The vaynes yet breath, the feareful hart doth yet both pant and quake.

IV. TRACES OF ORIGINALITY.

When due deductions are made for what the authors borrowed from Boccaccio, Dolce, and Seneca, what, it will naturally be asked, remains of their own? Not a great deal, it must be acknowledged. The intrinsic interest of the theme is much superior to that of *Gorboduc* or *Jocasta*, and they had the great advantage of a well-told story on which to found their plot; but it cannot be said that they added much to it, or showed any great skill in adapting it to the tragic stage. Of the characters not found or implied in Boccaccio's novel, Cupid is taken from Dolce, Renuchio, Megaera and the Chorus from Seneca, Lucrece and Claudia are the conventional confidantes of classical tragedy. In the early part of the play, where they had to develop the

story for themselves, they borrowed scraps of speeches from later scenes in Boccaccio or imitated Senecan commonplaces. The following dialogue, though not taken directly from the Roman tragedies, is an obvious attempt to imitate Senecan *steichomutheia* :—

- Gism. Oh sir, these teres love chalengeth as due.
 Tanc. But reason sayeth they do no whitt availe.
 Gism. Yet can I not my passions so subdue.
 Tanc. Your fond affections ought not to prevaile.
 Gism. Whoe can but plaine the losse of such a one?
 Tanc. Of mortall thinges no losse shold seme so strange.
 Gism. Such gemme was he as erst was never none.

(I, iii, 53–9.)

The elaborate setting forth of Gismond's disconsolate widowhood, to which the whole of the first act is given up, is a poor preparation for the part the heroine is to play later. Tancred's refusal of the plea for a second marriage, which occupies Act II, has more to do with the main interest of the play, but here too the progress of the action is slow and languid. The author of Act III contributed little of his own except Gismond's love-letter, which is not found in Boccaccio. Almost the whole of the action—the discovery, Guishard's capture and execution, and Gismond's suicide—is crowded into Acts IV and V. The order of events is in the main that of the novel, though a noteworthy change is made in that after the discovery Tancred sends for his daughter before he meets her lover—with this disadvantage, that at the time of the interview Gismond is not made aware of Guishard's imprisonment and impending fate. This it is which gives point to the magnificent speech of Boccaccio's heroine in defence of her fame and defiance of her father's tyranny. The English tragedians were able to make little use of this truly dramatic scene, partly because of the weakened situation, as they had planned it, partly because of their different conception of Gismond's character; the altered

position of Guishard, who is no longer "un giovane valletto" but "the Counté Palurine," takes away the occasion for some of the reproaches urged by Tancredi against his daughter in the original, but this is a change of less moment. The last meeting between the heroine and her father is more effectively managed, though she is finally dismissed somewhat perfunctorily with the stage direction "Gismond dyeth." The death of Tancred (added by the dramatists to Boccaccio's story) is only announced as an intention in the action, but we are informed parenthetically in the Epilogue that he "now himself hath slayen."

The various rhymed measures substituted by the dramatists for the blank verse of *Gorboduc* and *Jocasta* are ill-suited to tragedy and are not managed by them with any great success. But in spite of these obvious defects, *Gismond of Salerne* is in some respects an advance upon its predecessors. Cupid and Megaera are an improvement on the old dumb shows in that they are speaking persons, intimately connected with the action of the play. The episodical treatment of the plot, though poorly contrived, is characteristic of the English romantic drama, which aims at presenting the whole course of the action, in its inception, development, and consequences, rather than a particular situation or crisis, as was the custom in Senecan tragedy, and its Italian imitations. There is accordingly no attempt to observe the unity of time, though the scene is restricted to the court of Tancred's palace and the chamber of Gismond lying immediately behind it—the chamber "within," which was afterwards to become a habitual resource of the popular stage. Cupid comes down from heaven, and Megaera up from hell, so that we have here the beginnings of stage machinery. But these are after all matters of detail. The substantial merit of *Gismond of Salerne* is that it endeavoured to present a romantic subject with something of the gravity and dignity of classical trag-

edy. From the latter point of view, its superiority to its immediate predecessors, *Damon and Pythias* and *Horestes*, is abundantly manifest; and in both interest of theme and manner of treatment it surpasses the earlier and more academic models. *Gorboduc* is overweighted with political considerations, and the plot loses itself in abstractions. *Jocasta* has the double disadvantage of a time-worn theme and frigid manner of presentation. *Gismond of Salerne* struck out a new path in which later dramatists followed with infinitely greater art. It seems a far cry from *Gismond* and *Guishard* to the "pair of star-cross'd lovers" of Shakspeare's first Italian tragedy; but the Gentlemen of the Inner Temple at least attempted what he achieved—to present the problem of human passion *sub specie eternitatis*. What Courthope¹ says of *Romeo and Juliet* is true in a general way of *Gismond of Salerne*: "The power of the human will in this play counts for little; it is swept away by the tide of passion and fate. An image of the world is presented to us as a whole, and in the vein of reflection pervading the prologue to the play, the chorus before the second act, and the occasional speeches of Friar Laurence, we observe the Greek tragic doctrine of moral necessity blended with the mediaeval doctrine of human vanity." The authors of *Gismond of Salerne* did not succeed in reconciling these conflicting elements; but by bringing them together, however blindly and ineffectively, they at least suggested that they were not irreconcilable.

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¹ *History of English Poetry*, iv, 100.